

7. Beacons of light

I AM glad I am speaking to a gathering of artists, poets and literary men, as well as those who are interested in promoting the fine arts. You have met here to commemorate the Coronation of Krishna Devaraaya, the Vijayanagara Emperor who patronised poetry, drama, sculpture, painting, music, dance, and literature and revived Hindu Dharma through all these media. The culture of Bhaarath (India) that has grown from the ageless *Vedhas* (the four ancient books of Hinduism) was for some time overwhelmed by the influence of Western standards of life and thought, on account of the artificial support they got when Westerners ruled over this land. Now, it has to be re-discovered and re-established, mainly through the removal of the weaknesses among the people of Bhaarath. People have become too weak to be the recipients of the tremendously powerful Message of the Eternal Religion, *Sanaathana Dharma!* The individual is called by us, *vyakthi*, do you know why? Because we expect him to make *vyaktha*, that is to say, to manifest his Divinity! *Ishwarassarvabhoothaanaam hrddese, Arjuna, thishtathi'* "The Lord is residing in the heart of all beings, O Arjuna!" thus said Lord Krishna to Arjuna in the Bhagavadh Geetha. Demonstrate that it is true, realise Him within your heart, let Him become manifest, that is the obligation of the individual.

The Kings of Vijayanagara had virtue, courage, patriotism, love of Dharma, generosity, vision, statesmanship. They built many temples; they restored dilapidated ones; they constructed many tanks and towns. It is good to remember them and be grateful for what they did. But, there is one mistake which you should not commit: do not be contented merely with the contemplation of the past. Why survey the road which you have traversed already? Why allow the achievements of the past to curb enthusiasm in the present? You ask, can we today carve or build or paint or sing as well as they in the Vijayanagara Empire did? That is a sign of weakness, being benumbed by fear.

Give no room for cowardice

A hermit once met the Cholera Goddess on the road, returning from a village where she had thinned the population. He asked her how many she had taken into her lap. She replied, "Only ten." But, really speaking, the casualties were a hundred. She explained, "I killed only ten; the rest died out of fear!" Man is *Aathmaswaruupa* (Self-embodied), that is, *Abhayaswaruupa* (Fearlessness-embodied). If he knows his real nature, he will give no room for weakness or cowardice.

That is the main aim of culture, to cultivate mental calm, mental courage, to make every one feel kinship with every one else. You are born with the cry, '*koham*' (who am I?), on your lips; when you depart, you must have the declaration, '*Soham*' (I am He), on your smiling face. This is the message of the *Dharma* which Krishnadevaraya fostered. Take that lesson home from this meeting. You are now seeing with the EYE---a three-lettered physical apparatus, the three letters representing the three qualities: *Sathwa*, *Rajas* and *Thamas* (purity and poise, restless activity, ignorance and inertia). See with the clarified, unperjudiced, unattached 'I'; then, you see only One, though you see yourself you are indeed everything that refers itself as 'I'.

Win the title the *Upanishads* proclaim

It is because this single aim (*lakshya*) has been given up, that all this confusion (*avalakshana*), has come about! Bezwada Gopala Reddy said just now that the Pandiths who have specialised in the ancient scriptures and sacred texts are the *Maanasa-sarovara* (the holy lake where the holy

river Brahmaputra arises) of our culture; but, very few honour such men today. There is a general neglect of the higher aspects of culture. People know more about the details of the personal lives of film stars; more and more of them are getting interested in such trash. They do not care for the Pandith toiling in the same street; they do not know the names of the poets and the painters of their own town. That is the tragedy of the educated classes; they have no sense of values.

This day, when you have called here literary men like Puttaparthi Naaraayanaachar, I feel it is a day of *Aanandhodhayam* (dawn of Bliss) for every one; for, literature gives, or ought to give, bliss and peace. You honour a ruler for promoting culture and literature; well, you must recognise, therefore, that the rulers have a responsibility even today to continue the tradition. They must canalise the energy of the people and their intelligence into, moral activities and socially harmonising programmes. I always encourage religious, social and cultural activities (*Sanaathanam*, *Saanghikam* and *Saamskrithikam*) the three S's; if it is reviving the values recognised as great by time or recreating the damaged structure of the good society, or restoring rigour to some fine art that is declining, you can count on My Blessings. I always exhort people to win, not the titles that come to those who canvass support, but the title that the *Upanishads* proclaim as the highest decoration for spiritual aspirants: *Amrithasya Puthraah*, Children of Immortality.

Of what use is it if a man boasts that his grandfather was a great scholar? *Manuja*, the Sanskrit word of Man, implies a noble ancestry, from Manu Himself. Boast of your inner Divinity which is your greatest treasure. I must say this to the poets and writers who are here: Saraswathi is a Goddess, the Consort of *Brahma*, the creator, you are the votaries of a Goddess, whom every one worships; She confers wisdom and liberation. Be true to the highest boons She confers. Do not be contented if you give some food for the worldly hunger of the senses. Do not lower your ideals for the sake of cheap fame or vulgarise public taste. Instead of *loukika sringaram* (worldly enjoyment of sex), give *aloukika Aathmaanandham* (Bliss of the Self). Contribute to the expansion of love, the purification of motives, the enlargement of sympathy, the tolerance of difference, the respect for individual striving.

By all means, pay gratitude to the heroes of the past and the benefactors of the present. But fill yourself with enthusiasm to reach the Goal, by means of good thoughts and good deeds and good words. Kalluru Subba Rao spoke of the 25 years of struggle he has had, to celebrate this Festival in various parts of Rayalaseema, the struggle he had to change the name of these districts into Rayalaseema, instead of the old name, Ceded Districts or Dattamandala. He must be helped much more, not by means of *maatalu* (words) but by *mootalu* (bags of money). Festivals like this have to be celebrated more frequently, and I too shall join you more frequently.

In fact, Puttaparthi is just 16 miles off; still, I have come like this to Penukonda only twice---once when Krishnarao brought Me to preside over the District Athletic Competitions and now, when Krishnadevaraya brought Me! I am looking forward to share My joy with all and so, I feel that you have but to invite Me and I shall be with you. I know that you have not understood Me yet; you only see Me from a distance, see Me through the thousands who pass through your town to come to Me. If only you catch a little of their faith and joy, you will be amply rewarded. I have been worried--if worry is the name for that feeling--that while people from the farthest corners of this country and even from foreign countries are benefiting, the people of Penukonda are denying themselves the chance of sharing My *Aanandham*.

Penukonda, the town that derives its name from the mountain, has been too long a heap of stones, albeit a huge heap. Your hearts must become *kondas*, that is, huge mountain peaks, and on the top, as in Arunagiri, the *Jyothi* (light) of knowledge must shine like a beacon. Learn, experience, and be happy. Control, canalise and secure. It does not matter a bit if you have no faith in Me or in God. Have faith in yourselves, that is enough. For, who are you, really? Each of you is Divinity, whether you know it or not.

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